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Peace and Commerce.

At the recent Mohonk Arbitration Conference much was said, and very justly said, of the influence of commerce in promoting peace. In its present state of development and organization international trade is one of the most potent and ceaseless of the agencies which are binding the nations together and gradually constructing a fabric of world-wide connections which is faster war more and more impossible.

This unifying commercial fabric does not by any means consist entirely of selfish material interests, strong as these are. It has many ethical threads in it. Trade brings men and peoples into intimate contact, into knowledge of one another. It reveals to them their essential human likenesses, their similar virtues and faults, as well as their differences of customs and institutions. It thus opens their eyes to their own prejudices and narrownesses, as well as to the good qualities of those with whom they deal. It creates appreciation and trust; it removes dislike and offishness. Much of this influence is unconscious, but it is none the less real, and possibly all the more powerful because it is unconscious.

But it must not be forgotten that in the order of historic development peace has been the basis of

commerce much more than commerce of peace. So long as war was the rule between nations, steady trade between them was impossible. Their commercial dealings were irregular and timid. International trade found its course everywhere blocked by suspicious guards and relentless toll-barriers, and almost wholly suppressed while campaigns and battles were on. It was never entirely killed out by hate and war; but it led an uncertain and meagre existence, and consumed its temporary gains to a large extent in paying the exactions laid upon it, in the suffering of sudden and heavy losses, and in the expense of arming itself for its own defense.

One of the first great pleas for international peace was made quite as much in the interest of commerce and the blessings which it brings as in behalf of morality and humanity. Emeric Crucé, who, so far as is known, made the first definite proposal of an international tribunal of arbitration (1623), set forth in vigorous terms the value of trade and commerce to the welfare of peoples, and showed how the cessation of quarreling and fighting would promote them. He deplored the mercantile wreckage and ruin attendant upon the incessant wars of his time, and longed that what he had to say on the subject might be heard and heeded by all the rulers and princes of the world, as it was undoubtedly deeply felt by the suffering masses everywhere.

It is one of the clearest facts of history that just in the measure that peace has prevailed has commerce between peoples sprung up and grown. Peace creates the conditions and frees from restraint the forces which create commerce. Peace allows the population of countries to grow naturally, and thus increases greatly their economic power.

The importance of these truths may be made more real by an analysis of two significant facts connected with the progress of the past century.

The population of the world at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as nearly as the best statisticians have been able to determine it, was about six hundred and fifty millions. The international commerce of the world at that time was about fifteen hundred million dollars, or about two dollars and one-third per capita of the population. The increase in population during the century was about eight hundred and fifty millions. If the average earning power of the individual for commerce had remained